

THE SYSTEM OF SPIES.

A REFORM MEASURE.

REPRESENTATIVE WOODFORD'S BILL AGREED TO BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE.

WASHINGTON, March 19.—The House Committee on the Civil Service agreed to-day to report Mr. Woodford's bill creating a commission to prepare a simplified code of Custom-house laws and regulations, to be reported to the President, and by him laid before Congress at its next session.

This bill is not intended to supersede or hinder the passage of any special measures for the immediate reformation of Custom-house abuses. After all is accomplished that is possible in this direction during the present session, Mr. Woodford's bill will open the way for a thorough and systematic reform to be made next Winter, by striking at the root of many of the evils complained of, and providing a plain, simple and comprehensive code in place of the present mass of conflicting laws, decisions, and regulations.

(GENERAL PRESS DISPATCH.)

The Committee on Reform in the Civil Service, to-day, agreed to report with amendments Mr. Woodford's bill to provide for a commission for the reorganization of the customs revenue service of the United States. As amended, the bill enacts that, within ten days after its passage, the President shall, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint three commissioners, of whom at least one shall have been an importing merchant, whose duty it shall be to codify, simplify, and arrange all the laws of the United States and regulations of the Treasury Department, with regard to importations from foreign countries and the collection of duties thereon; for a reasonable reduction of allowances to officials and informers, and for providing proper safeguards in respect to the seizure of books and papers. That such commissioners shall be required to present their report to the President on or before the first day of November, 1874, in order that he may transmit the same, with any recommendations thereon, to the present Congress at the opening of its second session; and that such commissioners shall each receive a salary at the rate of \$5,000 per annum, and shall be allowed to appoint such clerks as they may require, which said clerks shall jointly receive a compensation not exceeding \$3,000. Said commissioners shall report their disbursements in detail with vouchers.

THE INVESTIGATION RESUMED.

STATEMENT BY JUDGE NOAH DAVIS—THE OPERATION OF THE LAW IN THE CASE OF PHELPS, DODGE & CO.—PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS.

WASHINGTON, March 19.—The further consideration of the question of moieties was resumed this morning before the Committee of Ways and Means. Judge Noah Davis appeared and began an explanation in regard to his connection, as District-Attorney, with the case of Phelps, Dodge & Co. He also said that the principal difficulty arose from the peculiar operation of the law, by which a person was required to give in his invoice the value of the goods he imported at the time and place of shipment, in which case he must give the contract price, if higher than the market value, at the time of the shipment. The Government had probably received a considerably large sum by over valuations from Phelps, Dodge & Co. than it had lost by under valuations; but notwithstanding this, the entire amount of the invoices in which any item was undervalued, was forfeited. He further stated that it was necessary, in order to understand the merits of this case, to keep clearly in view the distinction between legal and actual fraud. The law, in the penalties which it inflicted, made no difference between persons who had unintentionally violated it and those who had violated it with intent to defraud the Government.

He commented upon one case, which District-Attorney Bliss had been twice decided by juries in favor of the Government, and subsequently the penalty had been remitted by the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Davis said that in the first trial the defendant having no counsel and the jury disagreeing. The second time it was argued by himself for the Government, and by able counsel for the defendant, but the jury were instructed by the Judge that they must find for the Government on the facts admitted, as there had been legal fraud. As there was no fraudulent intent, the Secretary very properly remitted the judgment.

To-morrow morning Mr. Davis will be examined by the Committee in regard to the working of the law and two modifications proposed by him—first, that the actual value at the time of shipment should in all cases be the invoice price; second, that the jury in any case before the court should decide whether any actual fraud had been committed, or only technical violation of the law, without any guilty intent. In the former, the verdict of the jury to be final, without any power of remission by the Secretary of the Treasury; in the other, such power to be given to him.

THE STATEMENT OF JUDGE NOAH DAVIS

WITH CONNECTION WITH THE CASE OF PHELPS, DODGE & CO.—SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE MODIFICATION OF THE LAW FOR THE SEIZURE OF BOOKS AND PAPERS.

WASHINGTON, March 19.—Judge Noah Davis made a elaborate statement before the Committee on Ways and Means to-day, giving his knowledge of and connection with the Phelps, Dodge & Co. case. At the request of the Customs-house authorities, he examined the documents and statement laid before him by Mr. Bliss, and gave his opinion that it was a case that justified further examination. He then arranged with the authorities that the application for a warrant to seize books and papers should be brought directly to him, but should be kept under his control, and should not be served unless the firm should refuse to exhibit their books and papers after an interview with them. Obtaining the warrant the next morning, he went to the Custom-house, when Mr. Dodge and Mr. James came there, and he stated to them the nature of the charges, and the evidence laid before him justified the investigation. They expressed great astonishment at the charges, and declared their entire innocence of any fraud and want of knowledge of any violation of the statute. They said their books and papers were at the service of the Government for any examination they might choose to make. Judge Davis said the warrant should not be served, but he would keep it within his own control, and that Mr. Dodge and other persons connected with him would go to the store and receive from the firm such books and papers as might be required. They assented to this, and Mr. James went to the store for the purpose mentioned. Mr. James read them the statute which he alleged they had violated, and the form of the oaths, and stated to them that in taking the oath in that form, the person who made the entries had committed perjury, and showed them the penalties in such cases, but did not make any threats, except such as might be implied from what he had done.

On Dec. 30 he was sent for by Mr. James to come to the Custom-house and there found Judge Davis and the counsel of Phelps, Dodge & Co., negotiating a settlement. Mr. James said a proposition had been made, which he could not accept, according to the Judge's recollection about \$12,000. Mr. James said he had sent for the Judge to inquire in what manner the matter could be closed up at once. He said to them it could only be done by suit for the specific sum and the payment of that amount in full. But suggested that there might be a basis of settlement on the articles alleged to be actually forfeited by the alleged fraud. Mr. James was then requested by counsel for Phelps, Dodge & Co. to ascertain the value of such articles. He did so, and reported the same to be about \$25,000. James reported to counsel for the firm, and after consultation with their clients, they came to the conclusion to pay the amount to close the matter at once. It was arranged to do this on the evening of Dec. 30. The next morning Judge Davis had an appointment with Mr. Bliss in respect to cases then on the calendar

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When the present District Government came into power the old Corporations of the City of Washington and Georgetown and the County of Washington had certain liabilities, and among them were debts for new school-houses, wages of teachers, contingent expenses, &c. Besides these the old Corporations had made certain contracts out of which valid claims arose after the present District Government came into power. It would not, of course, have been just to require the new Government to pay these liabilities out of the current taxes after it came into power, but it did so pay them out of its current receipts, or out of the money which it borrowed.

Afterwards, a settlement of all accounts between the old corporations and the new government took place, and a payment by the representatives of the former to the latter of \$600,000 of bonds of the City of Washington, and more than \$300,000 of money was made, by which the present District Government was reimbursed for the money it had thus paid out. But this transaction has nothing whatever to do with the expenditure of the school fund collected since June 30, 1871. The money advanced to pay these liabilities has been returned to the present Government in the form either of money or bonds, and the account stands just as though the money had never been advanced.

The question raised by the memorialists, which has been done with the money collected for school purposes by the present Government, and which could not be lawfully diverted to any other purpose? Judge Merrick showed this morning that on page 71 of the Governor's answer to questions submitted by the Committee, the Controller of the District reported having received on account of the school fund from collections under the tax levies for three years, and from other sources, in the City of Washington, \$346,694.25; in the City of Georgetown, the amount received for the same fund was \$1,536.27; and in the county, the amount was \$5,622.48, making a total of \$671,852.01. The expenditures were, according to the same report, for schools and teachers in Washington \$508,012.62; in Georgetown, \$77,749.28; and in the county, \$71,433.80, making a total of \$657,195.70. This leaves a balance due the schools of \$14,656.31. But these payments were not all made from the taxes collected and from the fines received from the criminal courts. Twenty thousand dollars of the school-house fund in Georgetown was borrowed, and \$10,775.50 used in the county was paid in bonds for debts on account of school buildings. This makes the amount due the school fund \$45,381.92.

Whenever the District Government is asked to explain this, they begin to talk about the debts of the old corporations as though those had not been provided for from other funds, and to-day they filed a itemized statement, in which they put into the same account the amounts paid for the old corporations and under the present Government, and then, by giving the schools no credit for the amount received by the present Government from the old corporations on their account, and charging to them all that was paid out on account of the old corporations' liabilities, they make the school fund indebted to the District Government \$175,000. But all of their explanations have not yet touched the fact that there is \$45,000 school money which has not been expended or that the Governor's report is inaccurate.

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An examination of the school fund question then ensued, in which various members of the Committee, the Counsel on both sides and Gov. Shepherd engaged in argumentative conversation, but nothing new was elicited and the Committee took a recess until 2 o'clock.

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FOREIGN NEWS.

OPENING OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

TEXT OF THE QUEEN'S SPEECH—THE FOREIGN RELATIONS—LEGISLATION TO BE PROPOSED—BILL FOR REMOVING THE DELAYS ATTENDING UPON THE TRANSFERS OF REAL ESTATE—BILL TO BE INTRODUCED AMENDING THE BILLS AFFECTING THE SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

LONDON, Thursday, March 19, 1874.

The Assembly reassembled to-day. Shortly after the opening the members of the House of Commons were summoned to the chamber of the Peers to hear the Queen's speech read. It was as follows:

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN: I recur to your advice at the earliest period permitted by the arrangements consequent upon the retirement of the late Administration.

My foreign relations continue most friendly, and I shall not fail to exercise the influence arising from these cordial relations for the maintenance of European peace and the faithful observance of international obligations.

The marriage of my son is at once a source of happiness to myself and a pledge of friendship between two great empires.

The Afghan war has terminated in the capture and destruction of the capital, and negotiations which, I trust, may lead to a more satisfactory condition of affairs than hitherto. The courage, discipline, and endurance of my forces and the energy and skill evinced in the conduct of the expedition have brilliantly maintained, under the most trying circumstances, the traditional reputation of the British army.

I deeply regret that death has affected the most populous provinces of the Indian Empire, and produced extreme scarcity in some parts amounting to actual famine—over an area inhabited by many millions. I have directed the Governor-General of India to spare no cost in striving to mitigate this terrible calamity.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS: The estimates for expenditures during the current financial year will be forthwith submitted to you.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN: The delay and expense attending the transfer of land in England have long been felt to be a reproach to our law and a serious obstacle to dealing in real property. I trust measures which will now be submitted for your consideration will be found calculated to remove much of the evil which is complained of.

You will probably be of the opinion that the rearrangement of the judicature and the blending of the administration of law and equity, which were effected in England by the enactment of last session, ought to be extended to Ireland. You will be asked to devote part of your time to the accomplishment of this object. The greater part of these changes are inapplicable to trials in Scotland, but you will be invited to consider the most satisfactory mode of inducing procedure upon Scottish appeals in harmony with recent legislation.

Among other measures relating specially to Scottish interests, a bill amending the law relating to land rights and facilitating the transfer of land will be laid before you.

Serious differences have arisen and remonstrances have been made by large classes of the community as to the working of the recent act affecting the relationship between master and servant; of the act of 1871 dealing with offences connected with trade, and of the law of conspiracy. On these subjects I am desirous that, before attempting fresh legislation, you should be in possession of all the material facts and of the precise nature of the controversy. For this purpose I have issued my Royal Commission of Inquiry into the state and working of the present laws, with a view to their early amendment if need necessary.

A bill will be introduced dealing with such parts of acts relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors as have given rise to complaints and appear to deserve the interference of Parliament.

Your attention will also be directed to laws affecting friendly provident societies. These matters will require grave consideration.

I pray the Almighty to guide your deliberations.

In the House of Lords the address in reply to the speech from the Throne was moved by the Marquis of Lifford and seconded by the Earl of Cardigan.

An interesting political debate followed. The Duke of Somerset, a Liberal, made a sharp attack on Mr. Gladstone for listening to, if not encouraging, parties who favored the dismemberment of the Empire.

Earl Grey, another Liberal, described the dissolution of the last Parliament as an act of political suicide, committed during temporary insanity.

Lord Selborne, late Lord High Chancellor, came to the defense of Mr. Gladstone with a brief but eloquent vindication of his course.

The Earl of Derby, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the course of some non-committal remarks on England's policy abroad, intimated that the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh with the Princess Marie Alexandrovna was a matter of political importance.

The address, which is a mere echo of the Royal speech, was then adopted without amendment.

In the House of Commons there was a very full attendance of members, and the galleries were crowded with spectators.

Mr. Disraeli, on entering the chamber was received with triumphant cheers by his supporters.

When the members returned from the Chamber of Peers, the Speaker read a letter from Lord Chief-Justice Sir Alexander Cockburn, informing the House of the circumstances under which one of its members, Mr. Whalley, was adjudged guilty of and fined for contempt of court.

Mr. Anderson gave notice that on the 21st inst. he would call attention to the fact that British subjects had not yet received compensation for their losses in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Washington.

An address in response to the Queen's speech, similar to that introduced in the Upper House, was moved by Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, and seconded by Mr. Callender.

Mr. Torrens moved an amendment to the address declaring that Parliament is conscious of its obligation specially to care for India, and assuring Her Majesty of the interest and anxiety with which it will consider measures to alleviate the distress in that country and to prevent its recurrence.

Mr. Gladstone rose and said he would not seek to place any obstacle in the way of the Government in its treatment of India. He deprecated the creation of the Commission to inquire into the relations of employers and the employed, but concluded by promising to give the new Government a fair trial.

Mr. Disraeli objected to the amendment moved by Mr. Torrens as inopportune, and it was withdrawn.

The address was then adopted, and the House adjourned.

The Right Hon. Thomas E. Taylor, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster under the new Government, has been re-elected to Parliament from Dublin County by 961 majority.

CAUSES OF THE ATTACK ON IWAKURA—MEMORIAL TO THE MIKADO ATTACKING THE ADMINISTRATION—ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF THE INSURRECTIONARY MOVEMENTS—THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR TREATY REVISION WITH FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES.

SAN FRANCISCO, March 19.—The Associated Press correspondent's summary of Japanese news has just been received by the steamer Great Republic, which left Yokohama on the 24th of February. He gives an account of an attempt on the life of Iwakura, and says that some of his assailants were discovered and arrested toward the end of January, while the others still remain at large. It is understood that their motive was one of political hostility, which is felt toward Iwakura by many persons of various degrees of rank. It was never suspected that the assault was sanctioned by any of the real leaders of the antagonistic parties. These leaders have been much more formidable demonstration against the Government, of which Iwakura is the most important member, early this month, by means of a memorial to the Mikado, attacking the Administration in violent terms, and proposing radical and immediate reforms, chiefly in the establishment of a national legislative body. The temperate tone of this document would have deprived it of all weight had it not been

PRICE FOUR CENTS.

THE SYSTEM OF SPIES.

A REFORM MEASURE.

REPRESENTATIVE WOODFORD'S BILL AGREED TO BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE.

WASHINGTON, March 19.—The House Committee on the Civil Service agreed to-day to report Mr. Woodford's bill creating a commission to prepare a simplified code of Custom-house laws and regulations, to be reported to the President, and by him laid before Congress at its next session.

This bill is not intended to supersede or hinder the passage of any special measures for the immediate reformation of Custom-house abuses. After all is accomplished that is possible in this direction during the present session, Mr. Woodford's bill will open the way for a thorough and systematic reform to be made next Winter, by striking at the root of many of the evils complained of, and providing a plain, simple and comprehensive code in place of the present mass of conflicting laws, decisions, and regulations.

(GENERAL PRESS DISPATCH.)

The Committee on Reform in the Civil Service, to-day, agreed to report with amendments Mr. Woodford's bill to provide for a commission for the reorganization of the customs revenue service of the United States. As amended, the bill enacts that, within ten days after its passage, the President shall, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint three commissioners, of whom at least one shall have been an importing merchant, whose duty it shall be to codify, simplify, and arrange all the laws of the United States and regulations of the Treasury Department, with regard to importations from foreign countries and the collection of duties thereon; for a reasonable reduction of allowances to officials and informers, and for providing proper safeguards in respect to the seizure of books and papers. That such commissioners shall be required to present their report to the President on or before the first day of November, 1874, in order that he may transmit the same, with any recommendations thereon, to the present Congress at the opening of its second session; and that such commissioners shall each receive a salary at the rate of \$5,000 per annum, and shall be allowed to appoint such clerks as they may require, which said clerks shall jointly receive a compensation not exceeding \$3,000. Said commissioners shall report their disbursements in detail with vouchers.

To-morrow morning Mr. Davis will be examined by the Committee in regard to the working of the law and two modifications proposed by him—first, that the actual value at the time of shipment should in all cases be the invoice price; second, that the jury in any case before the court should decide whether any actual fraud had been committed, or only technical violation of the law, without any guilty intent. In the former, the verdict of the jury to be final, without any power of remission by the Secretary of the Treasury; in the other, such power to be given to him.